

Directive 2013/59/Euratom

This Directive establishes uniform basic safety standards for the protection of the health of individuals subject to occupational, medical and public exposures against the dangers arising from ionising radiation.

The legislation is designed to protect the health of workers, the general public, patients and other individuals by guaranteeing a uniform threshold level of protection. This applies to any planned, existing, accidental or emergency exposure which might arise. In particular, it applies to:

- the manufacture, production, processing, handling, disposal, use, storage, holding, transport, import to and export from the EU of radioactive material;
- the manufacture and operation of electrical equipment emitting ionising radiation;
- human activities with natural radiation sources that could lead to a significant increase in the exposure of employees or the public, such as the exposure of space crew to cosmic radiation;
- domestic exposure to radon gas in indoor air and external exposure to gamma radiation from building materials;
- managing emergency exposure situations that require measures to protect the public and workers.

The Directive provides for the publication of maximum radiation doses so that the public can check whether they have received, from various sources, more than the legal limit. There are also provisions for providing information when an emergency occurs. This must cover weather data and forecasts, air movements and ground deposits, ambient dose rates and contamination levels of essential foods.

National authorities have to inform anyone living within 50 kilometres of a plant at risk, and who could be affected, of the health protection measures they should take in the event of any emergency.

Ionising radiation from medical equipment is not covered by this legislation, but by the medical devices regulation (EU) 2017/745.